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The Battles of the Umayyads. Remembering War from West to East

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Abstract: The memory of war – and the use of this – is a constant in the Middle Ages and beyond. Within all this war memory, the remembrance of great battles is, perhaps, the most recurrent phenomenon. The pitched battle had an extraordinary impact on the people of the time, which made its remembrance remain alive and dynamic in the collective memory, as moments when the balance of power was seen to have tipped, or when aspects of collective identity were shaped. The battles became places of memory. This paper studies the memory circulating in Umayyad al-Andalus about the battles of their ancestors, the eastern Umayyads. Focusing on Ḥunayn and Marj Rāhiṭ, the two "eastern" battles most remembered in Umayyad al-Andalus and both with important implications for their dynastic history, this paper analyzes how this memory is presented, how these battles are "memorialized" and "commemorated" through texts and rituals, in what contexts of memory production they appear, and for what purposes.

Keywords: Memory, Umayyad, al-Andalus, war, *jihad*, Marj Rāhiṭ

Memory of War

In 1975, Álvaro Galmés de Fuentes published the "Book of Battles," *Libro de las Batallas*, an edition of a series of narratives about battles from the early days of Islam contained in a sixteenth-century Aljamiado manuscript. With a certain epic, even chivalric tone, it recounts battles like *Badr* or *Ḥunayn*,[1] and included exhortatory statements such as the following, concerning the day of Yarmūk:

> [Khālid b. al-Walīd said] "Go out to fight your enemies and rely on God, and defend yourselves with Him, for He is your Lord, defender and supporter [...] Know that these infidels are cowards, and God will help you over them; for I know their host, and they are like ants,

1 Galmés de Fuentes 1975.

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> and armed people without heart, and they have no strength over you. And you are a people of effort and courage. What do you answer?" And they all said: "We wish to fight and die in the path of God, for that is our duty until God shall judge between us and them, for He is the best judge."[2]

The survival and production in Aljamiado of this type of texts among the Morisco communities shows the important memory that existed in al-Andalus about the battles of early Islam, the symbolic capital they had as sites of sacred memory,[3] and its use as a way of giving new meanings to the present. In the case of the Moriscos, the Muslims forced to conversion in the sixteenth century, this way of remembering had a great sense of resistance, relief, and identity enhancement.[4]

The memory of war – and its use – was a constant in the Middle Ages and beyond. For example, a knight from Vélay, a veteran of the First Crusade, gave King Louis VII of France, probably in 1137, a luxurious illuminated copy of three chronicles of the Holy Land, including those of two eyewitnesses with whom he had shared a trip during the expedition to Jerusalem: Fulcher of Chartres and Raymond of Aguilers. His aim was clear: "the countless and eminent deeds and sayings of our ancestors must be entrusted, with a noble pen, to the most honorable of memories [...] so that you may be able to follow their footsteps on the path of the virtue."[5] Likewise, in the literature of the crusades, and of the exhortation to them, the discursive use of the memory of martyrs as *exempla* of crusaders willing to die in the confidence of obtaining the reward of eternal life was also common.[6]

In the premodern Islamic world, many similar examples of the memory of war can also be found. For instance, Ibn ʿIdhārī stated that in the Islamic West "people used to proverbially quote the Battle of Zallāqa; they magnified it and made no mention of another."[7] That means the remembrance of the great battles fought between Muslims and Christians in Iberia, in this case between the Almoravids and the Castillians in 1086, was part of the Andalusi and Maghribi collective imaginary.[8] Within all this war memory, the remembrance of great battles is, perhaps, the most recurrent phenomenon. The pitched battle occupied a central place in the imagination of the medieval men and women, although it was an exceptional martial

2 Galmés de Fuentes 1975, I, 275.

3 Ibn Rāshid, *Maghāzī* (2014), xviii.

4 On these topics, see, for example, García-Arenal / Rodríguez Mediano 2013; Green-Mercado 2019.

5 Rubinstein 2004, 132–168.

6 Tyerman 2016, 162–163.

7 Ibn ʿIdhārī, *Bayān* (2009), IV, 291–292.

8 Albarrán 2021, 241–261.

operation.[9] It had an extraordinary impact on the people of the time, which made its remembrance remain alive and dynamic in the collective memory.

In this sense, battles have long featured prominently in historical consciousness as moments when the balance of power was seen to have changed or when aspects of collective identity were shaped. War and battle memory communicated and perpetuated bigger collective truths about duty and belonging.[10] Happily, in the last several years there has been a growing scholarly interest in the memory of battles as can be seen through the examples of publications such as Megan Cassidy-Welch's *War and Memory at the Time of the Fifth Crusade*, or the volume *Writing Battles. New Perspectives on Warfare and Memory in Medieval Europe*.[11] Therefore, battles became sites of memory, following Pierre Nora's notion of *lieu de mémoire*:[12] sites of memory are particular traces, signals, references, such as facts, objects, places or institutions, that represent certain values, symbols of collective interest that become part of the memory. They are also contested and disputed episodes, the memory of which generates identities, consensus, and duties. In this sense, they are part of the cultural memory of each community, understanding as "cultural memory" what Jan Assman defined as "that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose 'cultivation' serves to stabilize and convey that society's self-image."[13] Therefore, they served, for example, as tools of periodization. In his *Narratives of Islamic Origins*, Fred Donner listed a number of references in which years are identified by a particular event or description rather than by a numerical date. He listed 32 cases for the 44 first years after the Hijra. Of those 32, 20 refer to battles or war events.[14] In the Medieval Islamic West, it is also common to find this phenomenon in the sources. One paradigmatic example is the Almohad victory over the Christians in the Battle of Alarcos (1195): Ibn al-Khaṭīb (d. 776/1374), in his *al-Lamḥa al-badriyya*, states that Muḥammad I (d. 671/1273) was born in the year of the Battle of Alarcos.[15] Similarly, al-Maqqarī says that the year 591 was known in the Maghrib as the year of Alar-

9 García Fitz 2004.

10 Ashman *et al.* 2020, 1–5.

11 However, this interest in the memory of war is not something completely new. For instance, Duby's pioneering book *Le dimanche de Bouvines* can be mentioned. Duby 1973.

12 Nora 1989, 7–24. See also Ho Tai 2001, 906–922. For an example of the use of the concept of "site of memory" in Islamic studies, see Hartmann 2003, 51–61; Borrut 2011, 177–228.

13 Assmann 1995, 125–133; Assmann 2011.

14 Donner 1998, 249 ff.

15 Boloix 2019, 281–302.

cos,[16] and Ibn al-Abbār mentions that the scholar Ibn Faḥlūn al-Saksakī died four days after this famous battle.[17]

The Battle of Badr is perhaps the greatest "memorialized" war landmark not only in the premodern Islamic West but in the whole Muslim world as it was part of Islamic sacred memory.[18] The people of Badr, *ahl Badr*, were the most excellent among the Muslims after the *rāshidūn* and 10 of the Prophet's companions, and they were guaranteed entry to Paradise.[19] Already Mūsā b. ʿUqba, one of the first authors of a *maghāzī* widely known in al-Andalus,[20] compiled lists of participants in Badr. In fact, it was so important and prestigious to have participated in Badr, and the memory of this battle was so important that it is said that, at the end of his life, Mūsā b. ʿUqba lost his mind and memory, so people feared he would deny the participation of his ancestors in the battle.[21] Copies of these lists about the *ahl Badr* can be found in almost any corner of the Maghribi geography, as well as other texts about the excellencies of the *ahl Badr*.[22]

Following this topic, the aim of this paper is to study the memory circulating in Umayyad al-Andalus about the battles of their ancestors, the eastern Umayyads. I will analyze how this memory is presented, how these battles are "memorialized," how they are "commemorated,"[23] in what contexts of memory production they appear, and for what purposes. In this sense, memory is understood as the dynamic process where narratives from the past are recovered and recontextualized in a given present to serve future goals.[24] This act of commemoration responds, basi-

16 Al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ* (1840), II, 319 ff.

17 Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* (2011), n. 1515.

18 Kaʿb b. Mālik reported that it is the most esteemed battle in the eyes of Muslims. Ibn Rāshid, *Maghāzī* (2014), 130.

19 Afsaruddin 2008, 57 ff. ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1037), for example, states that the *ahl al-sunna* are those who universally agree that the most excellent among men are Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, and ʿAlī; then the rest of the 10 (the companions who were assured of Paradise); then the rest of those of Badr; then the rest of those of Uḥud; then the rest of the people of compromise (*ahl al-baʿya*); and then the rest of the companions. See also Yazigi 1997, 159–167; Khalidi 2009, 87 ff.

20 Schacht 1953, 288–300.

21 Horovitz 2002, 29, 70.

22 This issue has been discussed by ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Samlālī in his introduction to the edition of Ibn Idrīs al-Sanūsī's *Sayf al-naṣr bi-l-sāda al-kirām ahl Badr* (d. 1304/1886), a versified text on the warriors at Badr and their merits. It depicts this battle – and its participants – in the historical imagination of the Islamic West as the one that has contributed most to the defense of Islam as well as the most important and noble of all expeditions. In addition, he gathers a total of 50 manuscripts of works on the *ahl Badr* preserved in different North African libraries. Al-Sanūsī, *Sayf* (2014), 37–46.

23 For this concept of commemoration, see, for example, Tilles / Richardson 2018.

24 For a comprehensive state of the art of the developments and perspectives in *Memory Studies*, see Tamm 2013, 458–473.

cally, to two purposes: to give meaning to the present or to create a counter present.[25] The first gives meaning, continuity, and legitimacy to the context of memory production through the remembered and reinterpreted past. The second comes from deficiencies experienced in the present and evokes memories of a past, usually taking the form of a golden age to be recovered.

Maurice Halbwachs already noticed this element of collective memory through the idea of it being reconstructivist: memory cannot preserve the past as such but only those memories subsist that society can reconstruct in each period. In this sense, memory functions through reconstruction. The past itself cannot be preserved and is therefore continually liable to a processes of reorganization in accordance with the changes that take place in the framework of reference of each present.[26] This can be the case, for example, with the Moriscos' *Libro de las batallas* previously quoted. Consequently, collective "memorialization" is not neutral since it is always linked to questions of identity and power. That is, we must take into account the relationship between the construction of memory and power or, as Jan Assmann calls it, the alliance between power and memory.[27]

The Umayyads and the Memory of War

The fifteenth book of the *ʿIqd al-farīd* by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, entitled the "Book of the Second Adorable Jewel About the Caliphs, their Narratives and their Battles" (*Kitāb al-masjada al-thāniya fī al-khulafāʾ wa-l-tawārīkh wa-ayyāmi-him*),[28] is a monographic section on the history of the caliphs that denotes a particularly local, neo-Umayyad agenda. Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi (d. 328/940), born in Cordoba in Ramaḍān 246/November 869, was a poet in the courts of the amīrs Muḥammad I and ʿAbd Allāh, although he consolidated his position mainly under ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III,[29] of whom he was also a courtier, panegyrist, and devoted collaborator.[30] His relationship with

25 Assmann, Aleida 2011, 62 ff.

26 Halbwachs 1997.

27 Assmann, Aleida 2011, 53 ff.; Peacock 2007.

28 Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, *ʿIqd* (1983).

29 On ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III, see, for example, Martinez-Gros 1992; Safran 2000; Fierro 2011a; Manzano Moreno 2011.

30 On Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, see Santás 2014, 58 ff; Toral-Niehoff 2015a, 61–85; Toral-Niehoff 2015b, 134–151. Toral-Niehoff depicts Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi as a "caliphal man" and the *ʿIqd al-farīd* as a "caliphal text" due to its inclusive discourse and its imperialist and integrating purposes, which matched the universalizing tendency of the Umayyad Caliphate of Cordoba. Toral-Niehoff 2018, 80–95.

the Umayyad was very close, and Ibn Ḥayyān's *Muqtabis*, the main source for learning about the Cordovan caliphate period, includes several of his poems in which he praises the ruler's actions in relation to war.

Although the whole of the *ʿIqd al-farīd* cannot be understood as neo-Umayyad propaganda nor as a mere panegyric of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III, according to Isabel Toral-Niehoff this section of history does denote a particularly local agenda, moving away from the universal message of the works of *adab*.[31] The chapter is made up of a succession of biographies of rulers, starting with the Prophet and concluding with ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Nāṣir. In this way, Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi creates an uninterrupted chain of rulers linking ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III with Muḥammad, emphasizing that he is his legitimate successor in the government of the Islamic community, in the caliphate.

On the other hand, the longest part of the chapter is, of course, dedicated to the Umayyad caliph of al-Andalus, within which is a panegyric *urjūza*, a poem that was partially translated by James Monroe in 1974.[32] The *urjūza* records the military history of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III from his rise to power in 300/912 to 321/934, the date on which it was probably composed. Due to the thematic and compositional break of this poem and the fifteenth book of Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi's work, it is likely that they were commissioned by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III himself; a narrative made for the Cordovan court showing the ideological discourse he wanted to transmit. This text projects a parallel between the campaigns of the Cordovan caliph and the expeditions of the Prophet, a parallel that becomes fully evident when Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi compares the *ghazwas* of the Umayyad ruler with the prophetic battles of Badr and Ḥunayn, twinning them (*kānat ukht Badr wa Ḥunayn*).[33] The choice and commemoration of these expeditions is not unintentional due to the resignification they undertake in light of the Umayyad context. Furthermore, this is not the only occasion where Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi proposed this analogy since he also did it in a poem in which he praised a Cordovan victory over the Count of Barcelona in the summer of 323/936:

> Helper of the faith, the victory has come.
> God has turned off the fired infidelity.
> Similar is to Ḥunayn and Badr the battle
> Given to the infidels, who have been cleared from the roads.[34]

31 Toral-Niehoff 2015a, 61–85.

32 Monroe 1971, 67–95; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, *ʿIqd* (1983), V, 239 ff.

33 Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, *ʿIqd* (1983), V, 241.

34 Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabis V* (1979), 380.

The Battle of Ḥunayn, led by the Prophet himself, is of great importance as it is one of the few battles that are directly named in the Qurʾān (Q: 9.25). Likewise, God participated in it through angels and the greatest of spoils was obtained. On the other hand, Abū Sufyān (d. 31/652), the illustrious ancestor of the Umayyads, had already converted to Islam and participated in this expedition, being, in fact, one of the few warriors who resisted, side by side with the Prophet, the attack of the pagans.[35] Therefore, this battle is one of the most important within the "Umayyad memory" since the positive role that Abū Sufyān played in it is indisputable. It is worth mentioning that the remembrance of his figure, specifically that of the Abū Sufyān pagan and rival of the Prophet, was also used by the enemies of the Umayyads, mainly Fatimids. For example, after the Umayyad retreat from an attack on al-Mahdiyya in 946, the Caliph al-Muʿizz stated that the same thing happened to the ruler of Cordoba as to his ancestor, Abū Sufyān, in the Battle of al-Khandaq, when he had to run away. Thus, al-Mahdiyya became a parallel to Medina.[36] It should not be forgotten that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III also had his own al-Khandaq, as the defeat of Simancas, which took place in 327/939 against Ramiro II of León, was known in Arabic sources.[37] The Fatimid caliph was probably also capitalizing this "traumatic" memory for the Umayyads.[38]

This negative portrayal of the figure of Abū Sufyān also appears in other Fatimid texts. For example, in his *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān (d. 363/974) collects an alleged sermon by Ziyādat Allāh III (d. 304/916), the last of the Aghlabid amīrs of Ifrīqiya, in which he justifies his defeats against the Fatimids by claiming that the companions of the Prophet were also vanquished on more than one occasion. This parallelism with the *ṣaḥāba* – strange to be ascribed to the enemy – makes sense when the Aghlabid adds that "war has varied luck (*al-ḥarb sijāl*),"[39] an expression used by Abū Sufyān after the Battle of Uḥud.[40] That is, the Fatimid scholar was thus placing Ziyādat Allāh III in the position of Abū Sufyān, great general of the Meccan polytheists and enemy of the Prophet at that time, again using the memory of those first battles of the Muslim community in his favor.

35 Ibn Isḥāq / Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat* (1955), 566 ff; Al-Wāqidī, *Maghāzī* (2011), 435 ff.

36 Yalaoui 1978, 7–33. On the use of the memory of the Prophet's time, and specifically Abū Sufyān's role in it, against the Umayyad dynasty, see Alajmi / Keshk 2013, 7–21.

37 Chalmeta 1976, 359–444; Fierro 2011b, 107–130.

38 After this battle, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III never led in person any other expedition. Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabis V* (1979), 437. In fact, according to Maribel Fierro, the pejorative use of the memory of al-Khandaq could be in circulation inside al-Andalus, against the caliph, after the defeat of Simancas. Fierro 2011b, 107–130.

39 Al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, *Iftitāḥ* (2006), 140 ff.

40 Ibn Isḥāq / Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat* (1955), 386.

In al-Andalus, the memory of Ḥunayn claimed by the Umayyads survived in other contexts. For example, in a poem composed by Ibn Darrāj to commemorate the campaign of Almanzor and his sons – ʿAbd al-Mālik and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān – against Santiago de Compostela (387/997),[41] this expedition was compared to that of Ḥunayn.[42] Almanzor and his sons were thus transformed into the small group of Muslims – including Abū Sufyān – who, together with the Prophet, resisted the pagans and defended the *umma*. Moreover, both *ghazwas* – that of Santiago and that of Ḥunayn – stood out for the large amount of booty obtained by the Muslims in them. Specifically, the first of them, full of *jihād* symbolism, was directed against the most imposing Christian sanctuary in the Iberian Peninsula (*aʿẓam mashāhid al-naṣārā*), which was destroyed except, supposedly, for the tomb of the apostle.[43] Several of its elements, such as doors and bells, were the object of loot, purified, resignified, and transformed into symbols (such as lamps for the mosque of Cordoba) that, relocated in a sacred space, became tools for the memory of the triumph against the infidel.

Similarly, already in the middle of the eleventh century, Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr's (d. 463/1071) *Durar fī ikhtiṣār al-maghāzī wa-l-siyar*,[44] a summary of the Prophet's biography in which the author claims to follow Ibn Isḥāq's narrative structure through Ibn Hishām,[45] shows that this memory was still alive. In the narrative of the conquest of Mecca,[46] Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr accurately details Abū Sufyān's conversion to Islam and omits some accounts recalling his war activity against Muḥammad. For example, some verses that Ibn Isḥāq/Ibn Hishām does quote and that mention how Hind's husband had led the pagan cavalry against the Muslims do not appear. The memory of figures such as Abū Sufyān, and of battles such as Ḥunayn, was, therefore, a disputed memory, claimed by the Umayyads and vilified by its enemies.

Going back to Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, this interrelation between the memory and resignification of the first battles of Islam and the Umayyad dynastic memory itself is something that can also be observed in other parts of his work. For example, in the second book of *al-ʿIqd al-farīd*, dedicated to the art of war, the author exemplifies the importance of constancy, patience, and courage in war through the battles of – once again – Ḥunayn and Marj Rāhiṭ.[47] The latter, the eastern Umayyads' battle most remembered in al-Andalus, will be the focus of the rest of this paper.

41 See, for example, Pérez de Tudela 1998, 9–28.

42 Makki 1970, 314–320.

43 Ibn ʿIdhārī, *Bayān* (2009), II, 294.

44 Albarrán 2020, 232 ff.

45 Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Durar* (1983), 8–11, 27. See also Horovitz 2002, 70; Jarrar 1989, 138 ff; Robinson 2003, 179.

46 Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Durar* (1983), 211 ff. Ibn Isḥāq / Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat* (1955), 540 ff.

47 Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, *ʿIqd* (1983), I, 98.

Remembering Marj Rāhiṭ

Since the proclamation of the Fatimid Caliphate in 296/909, the Islamic West witnessed a long-running conflict between the new Shiite power and the Umayyads of Cordoba,[48] a struggle that even led to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III taking possession of the title of caliph in the year 316/929 to counteract the legitimacy of his adversaries. Just as the Fatimids did,[49] the Umayyads also sacralized the war against the Shiite caliphate.[50] The Fatimids, discursively converted into heretics and deviants in the eyes of the Cordovan power,[51] were enemies of God who "dared to violate what was established by the Book and the *Sunna*" and therefore had to be fought through *jihād*. After the triumph in the fight against the Christian infidels, the ruler led the fight against the Fatimid heretic:

> When the Commander of the Faithful removed his sword from the polytheists [...] he devoted himself to prolonging and defending the Muslims wherever they were; to give greater force to the laws governing them, and to wage holy war against the innovative heretics,[52] the Shiite warriors and the *imāms* of heterodoxy (*al-ilḥād*),[53] renegades of religion (*al-māriqīn ʿan al-dīn*) and brothers of the devils (*ikhwān al-shayāṭīn*), who dared to alter the law and violate what have been established by the Book of God and the *Sunna*.[54]

That is, the Umayyad Caliph, as the head of the entire *umma*, had to defend the correct application of Islamic law and protect all Muslims, even if they were beyond the borders he ruled. This included the fight against the Fatimids – the brothers of devils – through *jihād* since they were modifying the divine order by transgressing what was established through the Qurʾān and the tradition of Muḥammad, which made them explicitly apostates who had denied their true faith.[55]

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48 On the Umayyad-Fatimid conflict, see, for example, Fierro 1987, 142–145, 157–159; Fierro 1989a, 33–42; Ballestín 2000, 9–28; Fierro 2004a, 119–156; Fierro 2004b, 299–327; Fierro 2011a, 17 ff, 133 ff.; Manzano Moreno 2019, 171 ff.

49 On some occasions the war carried out by the Fatimids against other Muslim powers is directly qualified as *jihād*, as is the case of their fight against the Umayyads of Cordoba. Halm 1994, 117–125; ʿImād al-Dīn, *ʿUyūn* (2013), 112.

50 Albarrán 2020, 75 ff.

51 Lewis 1953, 43–64; Fierro 1987.

52 "*jihād al-mutaṭāwilīn ilā tabdīli-hā*." Literally, "*jihād* against those prolonging the modification (in the law of God)." Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabis VII* (1965), 180.

53 The root from which the term *ilḥād* (l-ḥ-d) derives has the meaning of "deviation from the path" or also of "desecration" or "violation" of something sacred. Badawi / Abdel Haleem 2008, 837.

54 Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabis VII* (1965), 180.

55 This is the meaning, in this context, of *māriq*.

Another tool used by the Andalusī power to sacralize and legitimize the war against the Fatimids was the use of memory. In an interesting poem composed by Muḥammad Ibn Shukhayṣ on the occasion of the adherence of the Banū Khazar tribe to the Cordovan obedience against the Shiites in dhū al-qaʿda 360/September 971,[56] a text in which the Caliph al-Ḥakam II is called "*mahdī* – the rightly guided – of the Banū Marwān," in clear eschatological competition with the Fatimid *imām*, and the latter "pharaoh,"[57] that is, the worst of tyrants and enemies of God's people, the Battle of Marj Rāhiṭ is mentioned:

> He humbles himself before God to win in glory
> because in God's eyes only he who humbles himself advances
> and serves the message that Aḥmad brought us from God
> insightfully ensuring its continuity for those who do not.
> This has been happening since Marwān, on the day of Rāhiṭ
> with the idea of gathering all the aspirations of the community
> by advisory inheritance, which, having continued
> would have prevented the dissident's claim from soliciting the ears
> and spread throughout Egypt, against the followers of Muḥammad
> a series of evils from which it was previously immune.[58]

The Battle of Marj Rāhiṭ was fought in the year 64/684 between tribal groups from the Banū Kalb, supporting the Umayyad Caliph of Damascus Marwān I (d. 65/685), and groups from the Banū Qays, supporting ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr (d. 73/692), who had proclaimed himself caliph and had previously supported the proto-Shiite rebellion of al-Ḥusayn (d. 61/680), son of ʿAlī.[59] Ibn al-Zubayr was remembered, especially in pro-Umayyad circles,[60] as the prototype of the anti-caliph. Al-Judhāmī, an ally of the Umayyads, stated about him according to al-Ṭabarī: "ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr is

56 Ballestín 2000, 9–28; Fierro 2011a, 133 ff; Cardoso 2023, 82.

57 Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabis VII* (1965), 54. Abū Jahl, one of Muḥammad's greatest pagan enemies, who was killed in Badr with divine help through an angel, was also called "pharaoh." See, for example, Al-Wāqidī, *Maghāzī* (2011), 46.

58 Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabis VII* (1965), 55.

59 Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* (1989), 54–69; Hawting 2000, 46 ff.; Kennedy 2001, 31–32.

60 Antoine Borrut (for example, Borrut 2014: 37–68. See also Shoshan 2016, 171 and ff.) has shown that, in addition to al-Andalus, in the tenth century there was a "competing historiography" in the East that made the Umayyad memory very much alive and that also underlined the unbroken chain of succession between Damascus and Cordoba, even prophesying a return of the Arab dynasty to the Mashriq, an idea with which the Andalusi Umayyads also flirted. See, for example, Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabis V* (1979), 306–307.

a hypocrite (*munāfiq*) who has rejected two caliphs,[61] Yazīd and his son Muʿāwiya b. Yazīd, shed blood, and broken the staff of the Muslims. A hypocrite cannot be the master of the affairs of Muḥammad's community." After he was defeated, his body experienced the fate of the apostates: decapitation and crucifixion.[62]

A clear parallel was thus established through the memory of this battle: the Banū Khazar were the new Banū Kalb, victors in that battle in which they supported Marwān I, the Syrian predecessor of al-Ḥakam II, against the allies of the anti-Caliph apostate, represented by the Fatimid ruler, who had spread numerous evils against the religion of the Prophet and had already founded their new capital in Egypt, Cairo, in the year 358/969. Just as Ibn al-Zubayr had been defeated, the Ismaili *imām* would also be killed.[63] Furthermore, as had happened with Marj Rāhiṭ and the genealogical modification and revisiting of tribal divisions that took place around this battle,[64] the victory of the Banū Khazar served to redefine identities and loyalties. The arrival of the Banū Khazar in Cordoba was surrounded by an impressive ceremony.[65] Ibn Ḥayyān reports that the generals of the militarized provinces of al-Andalus were written to send their most representative men to attend the solemn entrance of the Banū Khazar, who brought the heads of the Fatimid allies. It must be remembered that the severed head of al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. al-Qays al-Fihrī, Ibn al-Zubayr's general in the Battle of Marj Rāhiṭ, was also presented to Marwān I, thus evoking also the memory of this episode through the ceremony.

A parade was organized in Cordoba to receive the cortege, with the best armed troops in formation. The camp was located in *Faḥṣ al-Surādiq*, literally the "pavilion esplanade," the same place where it was located when military campaigns were prepared, thus linking this ceremony with the language of war.[66] The entourage was received in the Bāb al-Sudda of the Cordovan *qasr* – a gate representing the power of the Caliphate[67] – by soldiers in perfect formation and with chain mails. The next day, they were received by the caliph himself in Madīna al-Zahrāʾ. For this reception, all the men of Cordoba capable of carrying out the service of arms were

61 Many of the rebels against the Cordovan Umayyad power were also considered hypocrites. For example, the frontier lords who abandoned ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III during the Battle of Simancas were labeled as hypocrites. Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabis V* (1979), 436. On this issue, see Albarrán 2020, 75 ff.

62 Kennedy 2001, 92–98; Anthony 2014. The "hypocrites" of Simancas were also crucified in Cordoba, maybe in another reference to the memory of the eastern Umayyads. On this issue, see Cardoso 2023, 213 ff.

63 Albarrán 2018, 113–150.

64 Crone 1994, 1–57.

65 Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabis VII* (1965), 50 ff.

66 García Gómez 1965, 319–379. Cardoso / Albarrán 2021, 216–256. See, for example, Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabis V* (1979), 287; Ibn ʿIdhārī, *Bayān* (2009), II, 205.

67 Cardoso 2023.

summoned, and they were given shields and spears to participate in the parade. In other words, an army was summoned as if it was a military expedition.[68] In this way, the Cordovan caliphate appropriated the battle – one that had not been fought in its name at first, since the Banū Khazar offered it to Cordoba *a posteriori*, after having betrayed the Fatimids – and the victory through the ritualization of war, emulating the Cordovan campaigns themselves. In this sense, meaningful locations associated to war – particularly to holy war – such as *Faḥṣ al-Surādiq*, or objects such as some of the most important banners of the Umayyad caliphate,[69] were used.

Moreover, it became a sacred victory for Cordoba, a triumph that was placed in parallel to that of Marj Rāhiṭ and its transcendence in the history of the Umayyad dynasty, through the insertion and recitation of Ibn Shukhayṣ' poem in the ritual of adherence of the Banū Khazar. In this sense, poetry was an ideal performative tool for transferring symbols and meanings referring to the collective memory and imagination.[70] At the same time, it was inserted into a bigger performative framework following the model of a military ceremony connected to *jihād*. As a result, this Umayyad war memory was linked to the own warfare reality of the Cordovan Umayyads, serving to its justification and even sacralization, setting it in its genuine war protocol. In addition, through this memory of Marj Rāhiṭ, the Cordovan Umayyads highlighted their link with their Damascene ancestors, thus legitimizing their position as caliphs against the Fatimid usurpers. In Ibn Shukhayṣ' poem, there is a clear reference to the East and its claim by the Umayyads:

> Say to the country of the East: Wake up from your dream
> Or, if not, still look with sleepy eyes
> The shadow of the Mahdī of all men is already beginning to cover you[71]

Consequently, this commemoration served also as a tool to claim the future (re)conquest of the East by the Umayyads and the reunification of the *umma*,[72] even using a terminology, that of "Mahdī," closely linked to Fatimid ideology,[73] thus contesting its symbolic meaning.[74] In this sense, in the poem there is also a reference to Egypt, a place where the Fatimids established their power base just two years earlier, in 358/969.[75] One can find further parallels. After Marj Rāhiṭ, and having established

68 Cardoso / Albarrán 2021, 216–256.
69 Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabis VII* (1965), 47. Albarrán 2020, 94, 278, 363.
70 On this issue, see Reynolds 1995. Albarrán 2022, 7–33.
71 Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabis VII* (1965), 55.
72 On this issue, see Cardoso 2023, 82.
73 Halm 1996.
74 On this issue, see Fierro 1994, 47–69; Fierro 2004b, 299–327; Cardoso 2023, 82.
75 Lev 1979, 315–328.

himself as *amīr al-muʾminīn* in Syria, Marwān sent his son, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, to Egypt to put an end to the Zubayrid power there.[76] Therefore, after the north African victory against the Fatimids' allies – the new Marj Rāhiṭ –, conquering Egypt was the next step. Memory thus becomes a tool for the future, an almost prophetic instrument with which to proclaim an intention, an aim that is to occur.[77]

There is another occasion in which the Banū Khazar are involved in the use of the memory of the Umayyad dynasty, in this case supposedly instrumentalized by the tribe itself. In a letter sent to Caliph ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III in the year 316/929–930, they stated that their link with the Umayyads has been maintained since the time of Caliph al-Walīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik (d. 96/715), who conquered the Maʿzūna fortress and handed it over to the aforementioned clan, having inherited it since then. In the same letter, the Banū Khazar also report their victory against Muḥammad al-Mahdī, another Berber ally of the Fatimids, a triumph with which "God purified (*fa-ṭahhara*)[78] the land from the filth of the prevaricators and cleaned it, so today they rule no place or site on the coast, except the city of Tāhart, a mansion of polytheists and a refuge for heretics."[79] Hence, God acts through the allies of the Umayyads purifying the land of the dirt created by those who follow the Fatimids, who are described not only as heretics but also as polytheists: the sacralization of war is thus absolute, emphasizing the religious nature of these campaigns and their missionary aim.

The use of this claimed connection of the Banū Khazar with the first Umayyads also justifies the fact that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III had chosen them as allies against the Fatimids: the ancestor of the Berber tribe, Ṣuqlāb b. Wazūmār, had converted to Islam, allegedly, thanks to the caliph ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, and since then they had been clients of successive Umayyads. The dynasty – which once again emphasized its Damascus-Cordoba continuity – was thus remembered as the one that converted the Maghrib to Islam, something they had to do again against the Ismaili heretics.[80] That is, through this memory inserted in the conflict against the Fatimids,

76 Mabra 2017. Interestingly, in the verses by Ibn Qays al-Ruqayyāt (d. 85/704) referring to ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz's conquest of Egypt, he is called *imām* of guidance (*imām al-hudā*), another concept related to the ideology of "mahdism." Mabra 2017, 55 ff.

77 The relationship between memory and prophecy has been discussed in the last several years. See, for example, McMahon 2020, 138–155.

78 In shaping the boundaries between believers and infidels, not only physical but above all ideological, the concepts of purity, *ṭahāra*, and ritual impurity, *ḥadath* or *janāba*, were of utmost importance as a means of inclusion and exclusion. Christians, for example, were considered *najas*, that is, susceptible to causing impurity when coming into contact with Muslims. Albarrán 2013, 25.

79 Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabis V* (1979), 260.

80 Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabis V* (1979), 257.

the Umayyads are characterized as a lineage permanently linked to the defense and dissemination of a – supposedly – correct interpretation of Islam against those alleged Muslims who deformed it. On the other hand, this connection of the Andalusī Umayyads with ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān can also be seen claimed through the custody and exhibition, in the mosque of Cordoba, of a fragment of the Qurʾān that would have been copied, with his own hands, by the third of the Rāshidūn caliphs,[81] and which would be stained with his own blood as it was the one he was using when he was assassinated:

> To the left of the *miḥrāb* opens a room containing pieces of furniture, gold and silver balls, and candelabra, all intended for the annual illumination of the great mosque with candles, on the night of the 27th of Ramaḍān. This storehouse also encloses a copy of the Qurʾān so heavy that it takes two men to lift it; inserted in it are four leaves of the Qurʾān which ʿUthmān b. Affān transcribed with his own hands; a drop of his blood can still be seen. This Qurʾān is taken out of its place every [Friday] morning; it is entrusted to two officials in charge of the service of the mosque, who are preceded by a third with a candle in his hands. This Qurʾān is kept in an artistically crafted case with splendid decoration. Already in the prayer hall it is deposited on the table; the *imām* must read in it half of the *ḥizb*; then it is taken back to its usual place."[82]

Moreover, the memory represented by this object, and the legitimacy it transferred, was also translated to the realm of war since it was a codex that, according to some traditions, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III would have taken to battle, specifically to Simancas.[83]

Finally, these strategies of justification of war against other Muslims and of creating enemies of God ended up leading to the use of an explicit and direct *takfīr*. Returning to the relationship between the Banū Khazar, the Umayyads, and their struggle against those who deviate from the path of God, this phenomenon is displayed in another episode of the *Muqtabis*, in which Muḥammad b. Khazar stated: "… you, Oh Caliph [ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III], are lord of every Berber on earth, since it was the Umayyads who led them to Islam, and their armies who brought them into it, taking them out of idolatry[84] by divine permission. Whoever of them denies this

81 On this Qurʾan, see, for example, Dessus-Lamare 1938: 551–575; Bennison 2007, 131–154; Zadeh 2008, 321–346.

82 Al-Ḥimyarī, *Rawḍ* (1938), 153 ff. See also Ibn ʿAbd al-Malik al-Marrākushī, *Dhayl* (1965–1984), I, 158.

83 See Zadeh 2008, 321–346.

84 The term used for "idolatry" is "*al-majūsiyya*," commonly used in Islamic sources for the Mazdeans and in Andalusi sources for the Vikings and Magyars. Here it refers to an absolute paganism.

grace, denies God and his prophet."[85] In this last statement,[86] the verb *kafara*[87] and the active participle *kāfir*[88] are explicitly used. That is to say, he is clearly turning into infidels – applying *takfīr* – all Berbers who follow the Fatimids, denying the "grace" that the Umayyads gave them. At the same time, through this commemoration of the conversion of the Berbers, the Cordovan rulers claimed the true leadership of Islam and the inheritance of the eastern legacy, thus denying the Fatimid legitimacy.

Conclusion: A memory from East to West and vice-versa

As has been shown, battles are events that produce memory, particularly contested memory, a remembrance shaped and redefined, and upon which discourses of legitimacy are built. They are, therefore, sites of memory in Pierre Nora's sense.

In the case analyzed, the use of the memory of battles such as Ḥunayn or Marj Rāhiṭ gives meaning, continuity, and legitimacy to the context of remembrance – such as the Umayyad-Fatimid conflict – through the remembered and reinterpreted past, even inserting this memory within rituals such as that of holy war, sharing its symbolic language and meanings. It also serves to highlight the Umayyad Damascus-Cordoba continuity. That is, a memory common to the entire dynasty, in its eastern and western realities, is thus produced and reproduced. As Antoine Borrut has shown, in addition to al-Andalus, in the tenth century there was a "competing historiography" in the East that made the Umayyad memory alive, underlining the unbroken chain of succession between Damascus and Cordoba, and prophesying a return of the Arab dynasty to the Mashriq, as has already been underlined in the Andalusi case. This phenomenon "led," for example, al-Masʿūdī (d. 346/956) to find a text listing all the virtues of the Umayyad family from caliph ʿUthmān to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III – the connection between the two rulers is, once again, underlined – further stating that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān I had been designated as successor by Marwān II.[89]

85 Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabis V* (1979), 266–267.

86 '*… fa-man kafara min-hum hādhihi al-niʿma, fa-huwa kāfir bi-llāh wa rasūli-hi …*'

87 To be an infidel; not to believe; to renegade one's faith; to become an infidel. Wehr 1976, 832, 833.

88 Unbeliever; infidel. Wehr 1976, 833.

89 Borrut 2014, 37–68.

On the other hand, the Cordovan Umayyads used legitimizing images similar to those of their eastern predecessors. For example, as the Marwanids did,[90] they appropriated the Solomonic precedent as well as the memory of Alexander the Great, as can be seen in this poem by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi about an expedition led by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III, where the ruler is compared to a prophet leader of supernatural armies like Solomon, and with the great prototype of the conquering king, and also a prophet, Alexander the Great, Dhū al-Qarnayn, in his role as protector of his frontiers against the infidel and apocalyptic danger represented by Gog and Magog:[91]

> In a single campaign (*ghazwa*) you seized two hundred fortresses
> full of smug rebels.
> Nor did Solomon do such,
> nor the builder of the wall of Gog and Magog.[92]

Perhaps, through phenomena such as those presented in this paper, a common, global, Umayyad memory can be traced. For example, the Battle of Marj Rāhiṭ was much mentioned in poetry of the Marwanid period, like that by al-Farazdak (d. 112/730).[93] It was therefore a site of Umayyad memory remaining very active in al-Andalus, and that was also reproduced, as Antoine Borrut has shown,[94] in the reduction of Umayyad history made by ʿAbbāsid chroniclers to a limited number of "sites of memory" such as the encounter of Marj Rāhiṭ or the siege of Constantinople by Maslama b. ʿAbd al-Malik. In fact, hostility toward the family of Ibn al-Zubayr was strongly felt even in the early ʿAbbāsid period. The Umayyad war against the Zubayrids – with Marj Rāhiṭ in the center – becomes, according to the ʿAbbāsid narrative, not merely an attempt by the Umayyads to preserve their own throne but also an attempt to safeguard the future potential of the ʿAbbāsid family and its prospect for political leadership.[95] In this sense, and related to the extent of knowledge acquired by the Umayyads of al-Andalus about the history of the Syrian Umayyads, it is relevant to ask if the memory of Marj Rāhiṭ reached al-Andalus through Umayyad "channels" or already through the ʿAbbāsid filter, which would

90 Borrut 2011, 217, 270.

91 On Solomon in Islam, see Tottoli 2002, 35 ff. Q 2:102; 21:81–82; Q 34:12–14, and Q 38:36–38. On Dhū al-Qarnayn and Gog and Magog, see Boyle 1980, 18–35; Cook 2002, 182 ff; Q 18:83–101.

92 Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabis V* (1979), 62.

93 Elisséeff 1991, 544–546; Alajmi / Keshk 2013, 7–21.

94 Borrut 2010, 23–61.

95 El-Hibri 2002, 241–266. Nevertheless, a pro-Zubayrid memory can also be traced in the East. For example, in *The Continuatio of the Samaritan Chronicle*, ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr is presented as Marwān b. ʿAbd al-Ḥakam's legitimate successor. Borrut 2011, 159.

be a nice paradox. In this regard, it can be stated that the sources on eastern history that were circulating in al-Andalus in the tenth century were already written in the ʿAbbāsid period, such as the histories by Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ,[96] al-Ṭabarī, or Ibn Abī Khayṯama.[97]

For example, the text by Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ was introduced in al-Andalus by Baqī b. Makhlad,[98] one of the pioneers of the science of ḥadīth in the Cordovan emirate, who studied in Basra with the Iraqi master and learned his *Taʾrīkh* around the year 232/847.[99] In fact, it is through his *riwāya* that this text has been preserved. The success of Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ in the Andalusi context may have to do with the fact that he does not present an anti-Umayyad view of history, as did other important eastern chroniclers.[100] In this sense, in Umayyad al-Andalus it was frequently employed, among others, by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi,[101] an author very close to the Cordovan power, as has been pointed out. Moreover, Baqī b. Makhlad himself added some additional accounts on the Umayyad period between the years 57/677 and 75/695, such as some issues concerning the conflict against Ibn al-Zubayr, so as calling Yazīd, Marwān, and ʿAbd al-Malik "Commander of the Believers" (*amīr al-muʾminīn*), which is not the case for Ibn al-Zubayr.[102] In the specific case of Marj Rāhiṭ, however, Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ's account is quite aseptic:

> In this year, the Battle of [Marj] Rāhiṭ took place in Syria. The Syrians had pledged allegiance to Ibn al-Zubayr, except for the people of al-Jābiya, the members of the Umayyad family and their clients, and [ʿUbayd Allāh] b. Ziyād, [all of whom] pledged allegiance to Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, and to Khālid b. Yazīd b. Muʿāwiya as his successor. That was in the middle of Dhū-l-Qaʿda/July 684. Then they marched against al-Ḍaḥḥak [b. Qays al-Fihrī] and met at Marj Rāhiṭ. They battled for 20 days, until the rout of al-Ḍaḥḥak b. Qays, [in which] al-Ḍaḥḥak and his companions were killed. Marwān had 13,000 troops while al-Ḍaḥḥak had 60,000. They battled every day for 20 days. Ibn Ziyād said to Marwān, "al-Ḍaḥḥak has on his side cavalry composed of Qaysites, and we will not be able to take what we want from them unless we employ a stratagem. So ask them to make peace. Hold back from battling, but prepare the cavalry. [Then], when they put down their arms, unleash [the cavalry] against them." The ambassadors went between them, and a al-Ḍaḥḥak refrained from battling. Then Marwān

96 Schacht 1969, 79–81.

97 See Hata, VI, 8–69; Fórneas 1983, 379–396.

98 Marín 1980, 165–208; Ávila 1985, 321–367; Raisuddin 1988, 161–168.

99 Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Taʾrīkh* (2015), 38; Fórneas 1983, 379–396; Andersson 2018, 17.

100 Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Taʾrīkh* (2015), 24–30.

101 Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Taʾrīkh* (2015), 39–43; Andersson 2018, 60–61.

102 Andersson 2018, 20. Likewise, Baqī b. Makhlad's *riwāya* also omits numerous passages, omissions that have been explained in a pro-Umayyad light. However, Tobias Andersson believes that, although this may have been the case, there is no irrefutable evidence to confirm it, and it may simply be that the version that Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ transmitted to the Andalusis differs slightly with that which he transmitted to other disciples at other contexts. Andersson 2018, 28 ff.

> and his cavalry attacked them, and they retreated to their flag in disarray. Al-Ḍaḥḥak was killed, as were many of his Qaysite cavalry.[103]

As can be noticed, it is an account in which the chronicler establishes a certain distance with the events and does not position himself with any side despite showing the strategic superiority of Marwān who, through his cunning and astuteness, is able to defeat an army far superior in number.[104] This issue was instrumentalized in al-Andalus as part of the triumphant memory of the Umayyads, as will be shown below.

To conclude, this commemoration of the "war memory" of the Umayyad dynasty, this use of dynastic memory as a discursive and legitimizing tool, must be linked to the process of historiographic construction that took place in al-Andalus in the tenth century and which would also be sponsored by the Cordovan court, eager to reshape the narrative about its past through works such as the fifteenth book of the *ʿIqd al-Farīd* or the *Taʾrīkh iftitāḥ al-Andalus* by Ibn al-Qūṭiyya (d. 367/977),[105] who reconstructs the history of the Umayyads in al-Andalus up to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III and links it to the previous path of the dynasty in Damascus.[106] In fact, in this work the memory of Marj Rāhiṭ was also used, comparing this battle with the one that took place between ʿAbd al-Raḥmān I (d. 172/788) and Yūsuf

103 Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Taʾrīkh* (2015), 116.

104 For its part, al-Ṭabarī's narrative is also unbiased, including accounts that praise both sides. One of them, which also refers to the overwhelming numerical superiority of the Zubayrids, shows a certain idea of divine help to the Umayyad army taken from prophetic models such as the battles of Badr or Ḥunayn: Marwān passed by some members of the Banū Muḥārib who were fighting for him, and pointed out how small their numbers were. They answered him that, next to them, there was a reinforcement of angels. Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* (1989), 62. On angels in battle, see Juynboll 1974, 85–87; Rubin 2003, 40–64.

105 See Fierro 1989b, 485–511; James 2009; Martos 2022, n. 114.

106 Manzano Moreno 1997, 59–85; Safran 2000; Martinez Gros 1992; Fierro 2011a. In this historiographic project launched in Cordoba in the tenth century, a double legitimacy was sought regarding the interpretation of the past: on the one hand, to connect with the eastern world, both with the Umayyad dynasty of Damascus and with the sacred history of Islam. Thus, for example, Cordoba became a new Medina. Maribel Fierro has shown how Mundhir b. Saʿīd al-Ballūṭī (d. 355/966), *qāḍī* of Cordoba, promoted the adoption of the *nisba* al-Anṣārī among the Andalusi Muslims who had no Arab tribal affiliation. Thus, the Andalusis became the new *anṣār*, the defenders of the Prophet, and Cordoba a new Medina to be protected. Fierro 2011a, 28–29. On the other hand, to link the Umayyad dynasty with the Iberian Peninsula's own past, thus showing themselves to be the legitimate heirs of the rulers who had succeeded each other in the territory that was now al-Andalus. That is why a work like that of al-Rāzī, entitled *Akhbār mulūk al-Andalus*, was limited to Iberia and began in pre-Islamic times. See Martinez Gros 1992; Manzano Moreno 2019; König 2015, 151 ff; Elices 2020, 71 ff; Brann 2021, 21 ff.

al-Fihrī (d. 142/759) when the former entered al-Andalus. Both battles took place on the day of ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā, and both were fought by members of the same family: ʿAbd al-Raḥmān I was, of course, a descendant of Caliph Marwān, and Yūsuf al-Fihrī was a descendant of Ibn al-Zubayr's general, al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. al-Qays al-Fihrī.[107] Likewise, in both battles the Umayyad armies were outnumbered, and in both the triumph came after a Marwānid surprise attack, by making their enemies think that they were seeking peace.[108] Moreover, in Ibn al-Qūṭiyya's account, where the memory of Marj Rāhiṭ is explicitly referred to, the number of dead in the ranks of Yūsuf al-Fihrī directly recalls that of al-Ḍaḥḥāk's army:

> ʿAbd al-Raḥmān asked: "On what day are we?" They answered: "Thursday and the day of ʿArafa." Then ʿAbd al-Raḥmān said, "Day of ʿArafa! On the eve of the Feast of Sacrifice on Friday? And fighting against a Fihrī? Ah, then tomorrow's day is similar to that of Marj Rāhiṭ! Indeed, the day of the battle of Marj Rāhiṭ, in which Marwān b. ʿAbd al-Ḥakam fought al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qays al-Fihrī, general of ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr, was on Friday and on the Feast of Sacrifice. The event was favorable to Marwān and unfavorable for the Fihrī, dying together with him 70,000 men of the Qays tribes.[109]

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107 Ibn al-Qūṭiyya, *Iftitāḥ* (1926), 26–27. See also Safran 2000, 131. In the *Fatḥ al-Andalus* this commemoration is reported by one of the companions of Yūsuf al-Fihrī: "… all the details of this day are identical to those of another occasion: an Umayyad there and an Umayyad here, a Fihrī and a Fihrī, a Kalbī and a Kalbī, a Kilābī and a Kilābī, on a Feast of Sacrifice then and on a Feast of Sacrifice today. By God, I fear this day is like Marj Rāhiṭ." *Fatḥ* (1994), 89. The *Akhbār Majmūʿa* also reports this memory mentioned by the Qaysids: al-Ṣumayl, a Kilābi leading this faction, "invoked those of Marj Rāhiṭ," praising them, to attract the Yemenis, led by Abū al-Khaṭār, and, subsequently, defeat them. *Akhbār Majmūʿa* (1867), 56–57. Therefore, and confirming what Crone suggested, in al-Andalus it is clearly noticed how the memory of this battle was used to redefine the presumed tribal alliances. Crone 1994, 1–57. The Battle of Marj Rāhiṭ also appears in Ibn ʿIdhārī's *Bayān*, where it is compared to one of Almanzor's victories. Ibn ʿIdhārī, *Bayān* (2009), II, 298. It was certainly a vivid site of memory in al-Andalus.

108 See, for example, *Akhbār Majmūʿa* (1867), 88–90.

109 Ibn al-Qūṭiyya, *Iftitāḥ* (1926), 26–27.

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